



MEMORIAL OF THE OSAGE NATION, OKLAHOMA.

APRIL 4, 1900.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

Mr. COCKRELL presented the following

**MEMORIAL OF THE OSAGE NATION, OKLAHOMA, MAKING CHARGES AGAINST INDIAN AGENT WILLIAM J. POLLOCK AND OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS CONNECTED WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF THEIR AFFAIRS.**

*To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled:*

The memorial of the Osage Nation shows as follows:

Nearly one hundred years ago, seeking to establish your sovereignty throughout the vast domain west of the Mississippi River, and recognizing the political existence and rights of our nation and our title to the soil over which we exercised dominion, the United States entered into treaties with us, by the first of which treaties, in the year 1808, your Government obtained title to a portion of our lands and expressly received us into its friendship and under its protection. Later treaties provided for "perpetual peace and friendship" between all your people and ours (1815), and also transferred to the United States more of our lands (1818, 1825, 1839, 1865).

Under the treaty of 1865, ratified in 1866, your Government accepted the trusteeship for the sale of our Kansas lands, being all which then remained to us, and a portion of the proceeds was applied to the purchase of the lands now owned and occupied by us in Oklahoma Territory. Your Government now holds these lands in Oklahoma, consisting of 1,470,058 acres, and also the balance of the proceeds of sales of our lands under the treaty of June 2, 1825, and the second article of the treaty of September 29, 1865, and subsequent acts of Congress, amounting to about \$8,500,000, in trust for the use and benefit of the Osages, and has agreed to pay us interest on these moneys at the rate of 5 per cent per annum.

These facts will remind you that, although dependent on you for protection, we are independent of your bounty. If the trusts which you have assumed concerning our affairs shall be honestly administered, our people will ever have sufficient for their support. You are at no expense on our account, excepting only the small salary, \$1,600 per annum, which you pay your agent. Out of the annual interest on our principal fund in your hands, after payment of the expenses of our schools, the salaries of our national officers, and other public charges, there remains more than \$200 per capita, which is paid to our people



quarterly and is ample for all our simple wants, in addition to which we have other revenues from our surplus grazing lands, permit moneys, etc.

We come to you now complaining that certain of your officials are not properly discharging the trusts above mentioned, and we ask you to remove the evils under which we now suffer and to avert the dangers that now threaten us and our posterity.

I. On December 31, 1881, our people in convention formally adopted a constitution fashioned after your own. Ever since that time we have governed ourselves as a nation, dependent upon yours, pursuant to our constitution and laws, so far as your officials have permitted us.

Certain of your officials have shown the utmost contempt for our laws, and have declared their wish to abolish our national organization. Against this we enter our most earnest protest. Our people take great pride in our local government, viewing with alarm and indignation the hostile threats which your officials have uttered in reference thereto. We are not prepared to surrender our right of self-government. Our present organization was a distinct change from the tribal form of government of chiefs and headmen which we inherited from our fathers and is well calculated, in connection with our school system, to prepare our people for that citizenship which you enjoy. That will undoubtedly come in due season, but to force it upon us now, or until we consent, would be a hateful act of oppression of which we feel that you are incapable.

We invite your attention to a copy of our printed constitution and laws. We do not claim that they are perfect, but the principles thereof are dear to us. The right of local self-government is as precious to us as it was to your forefathers.

II. We ask you to cause a thorough and an honest investigation to be made of the use of our pasture lands and of our account for leases of such lands, to the end that we may be given credit for all moneys that have been collected by your officers, agents, or employees, and for all moneys which but for their neglect would have been collected for the use of our pasture lands.

Under your laws (26 S. L., 795) and the regulations of your Interior Department, authority from our national council is the first step to be taken in the leasing of our pasture lands, and a certified copy of the council proceedings must be attached to each lease and made a part thereof. We are informed and believe, and so charge, that recently leases have been made contrary to these provisions.

We charge that upward of 200,000 cattle have been, during the past year, wrongfully permitted by your agent, William J. Pollock, to graze on our lands without our consent.

III. We ask you to refuse the demands of the traders for the so-called "big payment" or the distribution of any portion of our trust funds for the payment of their claims.

These traders were allowed by you to come among us, and we had no voice in the matter. We did not ask for them. They are given by you a monopoly of our trade. They know very well the proper limit of credit to be given to each of our people, many of whom are improvident, but the traders have knowingly and wrongfully given them unlimited credit and encouraged them to run up large accounts, intending to demand payment from your Government out of the interest-bearing funds in its hands belonging to us.

Many of our people owe little or nothing to the traders. Few of them understand the consequences of such a reduction of their principal fund. But by misrepresentations the traders have induced some of our people to consent to it, and have employed lawyers and lobbyists to press the nefarious scheme upon Congress.

We say that your agent, Pollock, has been and is now aiding the traders to secure the big payment, and to that end he has prostituted all the powers of his office. He has, to that end, refused to recognize our officers and council who were duly elected in August, 1898, and now refuses to pay them their lawful salaries. He and others of your officers and employees have near relatives and friends engaged in and depending on the business of the traders. Every conceivable method has been used by him to induce or force us to consent.

Not only the agent, but also his official superiors have been and are now favoring the big payment. You have heretofore superficially investigated the traders' claims, and the facts then disclosed, together with consideration of the methods used to force it upon us, should prevent Congress from supporting the measure.

IV. We ask you to make a thorough investigation of the management of our affairs since May, 1898, by your agent, William J. Pollock, and all other officials who may be responsible for the condition of affairs of which we complain.

In August, 1898, our people elected their national officers and the members of our national council. We charge that the said Pollock wrongfully and maliciously interfered in said election and attempted to secure the election of certain persons whom he thought he could control for the benefit of himself and his friends; that he wrongfully and willfully refused to recognize the officers and councilmen who were then duly elected, and that one of his motives in so doing and in withholding their salaries was to coerce them to consent to the so-called "big payment" demanded by the traders; that he has wrongfully usurped the functions of our treasurer with intent to obtain, and thereby did obtain, personal possession and control of the moneys which belong in our local treasury; that he prevented our council and officers from performing their respective duties concerning our grazing lands, and thereby permitted over 200,000 cattle to illegally graze on our reservation, and his action in interfering with the Osage Indian officials in the performance of their respective legal duties has caused a great financial loss to our people; that he is closely related by family ties to persons who are concerned in the business of the traders, and that he has in every way favored the traders at the expense of our people.

We charge against said Pollock:

1. That he has wrongfully retained and now retains moneys belonging to us.

2. That he has unlawfully ignored our tribal and national rights.

3. That he has improperly and tyrannically used the powers of his office as agent to oppress us, collectively and individually.

4. That he is habitually profane and blasphemous and without the moral qualifications which an Indian agent should possess. His presence in our midst would contaminate and destroy the morals of our people if it were not for the fact that they fear, abhor, and avoid him.

5. That he is notoriously untruthful.

We ask that in the several investigations herein asked for you allow

us to be represented by counsel to be selected by ourselves and to be paid out of our national funds.

We have repeatedly laid all these matters before the Secretary of the Interior and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and have invited the President to interfere on our behalf. For more than a year we have continued to pour into your Interior Department our protests and complaints, but they have been ignored. We now appeal to you and ask for action on your part and immediate and permanent relief in the premises.

Be it enacted by the Osage national council, duly assembled in their council building at Pawhuska, Okla., this 31st day of March, 1900, that the above memorial be adopted and that the same be sent to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.

[SEAL.]

PETER BIGHEART,  
*Chairman of Council.*

BLACK (his x mark) DOG,  
*Principal Chief.*

ALEX. TALL CHIEF,  
*Private Secretary.*

Attest:

GEO. CONNER,  
*National Secretary.*

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